

# When Home Isn't Safe: Tips for Victims of Domestic Abuse

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**Safety Alert:** Computer use can be monitored and it is impossible to completely clear your browser history. If you are afraid your internet usage might be monitored, call **the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 or 800-787-3224 TTY**, and **en Español**.

The coronavirus has forced you to adapt to a new normal. The stay-at-home orders have you out of your daily routines, from going to work, to meeting with friends and sending your kids to school or daycare. These losses are meant to keep you safer and stop the spread of COVID-19. However, they also disconnect you from your community and family networks. This distance reduces important emotional supports that are important for victims of domestic abuse. Isolating at home with an abusive spouse or partner during this time of higher stress and anxiety might even make you feel less safe than before.

For many victims, abuse might not be constant, but when a partner's behavior is unpredictable, it can make you feel as if you are constantly walking on eggshells. Managing your self-care, and looking out for your pets or children, while in quarantine together can be a source of constant stress in that situation. If this sounds like your experience, the **Family Advocacy Program** and Military OneSource have some tips to help you **prioritize your wellness and safety while at home** in an unhealthy or abusive relationship.

## If You Are in Immediate Danger or Risk of Harm

Call military law enforcement or 911 to reach your community police outside of the gate for an emergency.

## Maintain your support network from afar

- Create scheduled check-ins with trusted family, friends or neighbors over phone, text or social media so they know you're OK. You may not feel comfortable or safe sharing information about your relationship while home with your partner (for example, in case your partner overhears you, or has **access to your phone, email, or web activity**)—but if

you can, checking in with your network helps them to be aware of potential concerns for your safety. If abuse has escalated and you're not reaching out to them at the time you normally would, this can tip off your network to call for help.

- Develop a code word or phrase to share with your support network to covertly indicate you are experiencing an emergency and need help immediately.
- Have a discussion with your friends and family about what help is most important to you if you ever need them to intervene (since help in an emergency can look different to different people). Let your friends know helping you may mean asking them to be prepared to call 911, or calling your partner's cell phone to interrupt his or her behavior by distraction.

## Maximize your privacy at home, especially to connect with people who can help

- Going to the bathroom and running the shower or faucet while on the phone with a friend, or when calling the Family Advocacy Program or the National Domestic Violence Hotline, can help add another layer of privacy and noise to distract from your partner overhearing your conversation.
- Going outside alone, if possible, is a good way to take time to breathe, practice mindfulness, and center yourself to help calm your anxiety. This is also a good time to make a call to friends or family, call [Military One Source](#) to speak with a consultant for some brief, non-medical counseling, or [make an appointment for telehealth with a counselor](#), through FAP or another provider.

## Make a backup plan for emergencies

- Be prepared — in extreme cases, victims may determine they need to leave home for their safety, and their children's safety. If your partner has been physically abusive, or threatened violence, it is a good idea to hide a bag of essentials in the event the abuse escalates to the point you need to leave. In a safe place accessible only to you, keep items such as: medications, spare cash (if available), a change of clothes, phone charger, and IDs. This is also recommended if your partner has access to a weapon.
- Plan the fastest and easiest routes out of your home (and if you can, share with your children) in the event you need to quickly escape.

## Manage your situation with help from these resources

Each relationship and situation are different, and not all of these tips may work for you or your family. If you are unsure about where to start, you can contact your installation's Family Advocacy Program to [speak with a victim advocate](#), who can help you develop a safety plan unique to you. You can also talk or chat with an advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, by [visiting thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org) or calling 800-799-7233.

Getting help for an abusive relationship can be even more complicated for individuals with a disability, or who are caring for loved ones in a multi-generation household. The following information will help you locate the resources you may need.

- For updated information for older adults and persons with disabilities on COVID-19, [visit the Administration for Community Living resource page from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#).
- For families with special needs, please [contact your installation Exceptional Family Member Program Family Support staff](#).
- You may wish to also explore resources from the [National Deaf Domestic Violence Hotline](#), where advocates are available 24/7 for crisis intervention, education, information and referrals for Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled callers: 855-812-1001.

## Learn the latest information on COVID-19

For Department of Defense updates for the military community regarding the virus that causes COVID-19, view the following sites:

- Visit [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov), [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), [USA.gov](https://www.usa.gov) and [Defense.gov](https://www.defense.gov).
- Follow Military OneSource's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) platforms.
- Continue to visit the [Coronavirus Updates for Our Military Community](#) page.
- Check [Move.mil](https://www.move.mil) for PCS-related updates.

[When Home Isn't Safe-Military One Source](#)

## KEY MESSAGES:

- When it comes to domestic abuse, everyone's situation is different – it can happen to anyone and is not their fault. Whatever the circumstances, a call to your installation's Family Advocacy Program or Military OneSource can link you to resources and support.
- Preventing abuse in the military community starts with promoting an understanding of what safe and healthy relationships look like, and providing ways for individuals to take steps such as setting boundaries and seeking help in stressful times, and knowing what support is available in a crisis.
- FAP is committed to supporting service members and their families impacted by domestic abuse through victim advocacy and crisis intervention. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, and you are not sure what to do, make a call to one of the victim advocates on your installation.
- If you are concerned about your safety and need immediate support, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 or live chat with an advocate at [thehotline.org](https://thehotline.org).
- If a friend or family member is experiencing domestic abuse, do not pressure them to leave. Instead, tell them you are there for them and that you can help them plan for their safety or seek outside support when they are ready. Ask them how they prefer stay in touch and support and believe them.
- In times of increased isolation, make yourself available for scheduled check-ins with loved ones who may feel unsafe at home – whether it be by phone, text or social media – so you will know if they're OK or if you need to call for help.

## IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER PLEASE CALL 911

For help with domestic violence, please refer to the resources below by county:

**Macomb:** Turning Point 24-hour Crisis Line: 586-463-6990 Turning Point's mission is to provide programs and resources that enable victims/survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to regain control of their lives.

**Oakland:** HAVEN's Residential Program HAVEN's residential program is Oakland County's only 24-hour emergency shelter exclusively for domestic violence and sexual assault victims and their children. If you need a place to go, call the Crisis and Support Line at 248-334-1274, or chat live with us online.

**Wayne:** First Step 24-hour Help Line (734) 722-6800. The mission of First Step is to eliminate both domestic and sexual violence and to provide comprehensive services to individuals and families impacted by these crimes.

**National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1- 800-799-7233

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